

Life Found Elsewhere?

Post by "Cassius" of April 17, 2025 at 8:33 AM

Another way of looking at these issues is to compare Epicurean philosophy to rules of evidence that are followed in court (I can speak of the USA but I presume most other courts have similar rules).

Rules of evidence determine what kind of testimony can even be allowed to be heard and considered by the court or jury. Hearsay testimony is mostly disallowed, but it is allowed in some circumstances. There are many other such rules.

But one of the foundational rules of court is that judgments must be made on "evidence," and not on pure speculation. "Circumstantial evidence" (reasonable evaluation of circumstances) is allowed in some cases when "direct evidence" ("I saw it") testimony is not available, or in addition to direct evidence.

But pure speculation ("I think it's possible") is never even allowed in evidence. Courts gain their legitimacy by being based on evidence and not whim, and that means excluding speculations or opinions that are not based on evidence.

Epicurus' canonical approach to life means that he provides rules of evidence that allow you to decide when to believe a thing is true. Epicurus's canonic doesn't require you to be in contact with eternal forms like Plato, or have the testimony of priests to whom truth is revealed like most religions, or to accept that standards of omniscience or omnipotence are a legitimate standard for judging things to be true -- and in fact Epicurus doesn't even accept those as legitimate evidence at all.